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ADDRESS
OF
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER SAMUEL S. BURDETT,
AT THE
16TH ANNUAL ENCAMPMENT
OF THE
Department of the Potomac, G. A. R.
WASHINGTON, D. C., JAN. 30, 1884.

COMRADES: For the second time it is my pleasure to stand in your chief place to give an account of the progress of the affairs committed to my charge as Commander of the Department of the Potomac, and to preside whilst you, who compose its governing body, determine its future course, and select those upon whom the trust of office is to be imposed for the ensuing year.

The year now closing has been one of prosperity for the Grand Army of the Republic in this Department. I think I may say that in every essential particular that makes for our good, both in the Posts and in the Department proper, there has been substantial progress. I shall turn over the trust I hold to the successor you will this evening select, proud of the individuals who compose its ranks, of the Posts which represent its primary organizations, and of the Department which is its whole, and with but the single regret that I have not been better able to serve both Comrades, Posts, and Department.

The particulars of our state and condition as an organized society you will learn from the reports of the Assistant Adjutant-General,

of the Assistant Quartermaster-General, and of the other officers comprising the staff.

Generally I may say as to membership that at our last Annual Encampment I reported to you that our numbers were 1,439; we now number 1,674, a gain of 235 in the past year. The gain in the past two years has been 834, which lacks but six of being as many as at the beginning of that period stood on our rolls.

The largest gain made during the year was by Post No. 5, which reports an increase by new musters of 115.

A scrutiny of the returns of the several Posts will show that, as a rule, the ranks have been cleared of useless and careless files by dropping out such as by failure to pay the small sum required as dues had, by our law, made themselves subject to that penalty. This course is honest and therefore commendable. It cuts down, perhaps, the number of the Posts' representatives in the Department Encampment, but it relieves the faithful Comrades of the Posts from the necessity, for that purpose, of paying the Department dues of the unworthy; and enables us all to know just what, for all desirable ends, the strength of the Department is. If this course continues to be pursued, I know of but one other requisite to continue the solid success we now enjoy, and that is that whilst the weeds that are in our fields are being plucked up and cast out, and all proper energy is used to gather in other good material, that the black-ball be faithfully and fearlessly used to keep from entering those who are unworthy. I know of no act which seems to me to be so indescribably mean and cowardly as the use of the black-ball for personal ends, and especially for revengeful purposes. To wound a good man from behind such a cover requires the assassin's instinct; nevertheless, to cast it against the unworthy is a high duty.

An examination of the returns made by the several Posts of Comrades entitled to seats in the Department Encampment has convinced me that there is cause to believe that a number of those so returned as entitled to seats as Past Post Commanders may not be so entitled. Whether they are so entitled or not is a delicate question, not altogether free from difficulty, and one upon which there ought not to be action until there has been a most full and dispassionate inquiry by a committee of discreet Comrades. I should have been pleased if I could have passed this subject over

without remark, but at the last hour I conclude that to do so would be to leave a duty undone. I recommend that this Encampment raise a proper committee to examine and report upon the matter, notifying all Comrades affected, and hearing them in defense of their right to sit. That the report be made to the next semi-annual Encampment, when, as there will be no exciting causes to be tried, there will be time for discussion, and circumstances warranting an unprejudiced judgment.

THE NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT.

The Grand Army of the Republic now numbers about a quarter of a million Comrades. Its splendid array is composed of every element that makes up the loyal society of the country it saved. As in the day that it gathered at the call of patriotism it stood forth the very flower of the country's youth, to-day they who survive are the choice fruit of the autumn fast coming on.

It is a rare privilege to stand in the midst of the assembled representatives of the Grand Army of the Republic when met in National Encampment. A tempest of recollections are set free in flight; a world of anxious hope for our country's future is inspired by the presence, shoulder to shoulder once again, of the remnant of that mountain of strength and patriotism, whose resolution was never shaken in the darkest hour, whose resistless bravery knew no faltering whilst a single traitorous American held yet in grasp a weapon against his country.

The last Annual Encampment held at Denver, Colorado, was in the matter of attendance, *personnel*, and general interest, the equal at least of any that have preceded it. Very full reports of its proceedings have been printed, and are so generally accessible that I do not feel called upon, and would not be justified in repeating them here. A scrutiny of them will show that this Department was fully represented, and that it bore an honorable part in its deliberations. The next National Encampment will meet at Minneapolis, in the State of Minnesota. It will be a rare privilege to be there, to be among the Northmen whose patriotism and hospitality is as hot and full as the breath of their winter is cold and the ice of their lakes is strong. The far East has seen our gatherings; the West has witnessed our array; the march is set for the North. Some day before silence comes over all the ranks let

us hope to see the South again, but not until that time, not yet come, when every American there may walk erect and go his way without submitting to the censorship of any; not because he is a Southerner, but because he is an American.

THE RELIEF PROBLEM.

The recommendations made by me a year since relative to a system of relief, which were adopted by the Encampment, after a year's trial, have, I think, been found to work well. The committee's report will advise you of particulars, and of a suggestion now made that the committee be continued, but consist only of the Commander, Assistant Adjutant-General, and Assistant Quartermaster-General. This suggestion grows out of the fact that, though others were appointed, they seldom gave us the aid of their presence. In this respect exception should be made as to Comrade Rothery, of Post 5, who is always faithfully at his post, and ready to do more than his fair share of duty.

The suggestion as to who shall compose the Department Relief Committee for the coming year is, of course, in the nature of a report only of what last year's experience suggests. I do not recommend that the Encampment take formal action upon it, but do recommend that the incoming Department Commander be left free to exercise his own judgment in that particular matter, and, to that end, that the resolution adopted at the last Encampment be continued as the law of the case. Upon the general subject I have only this further to say, that if the Posts have faithfully refrained from entertaining the applications for relief of those not immediately connected with them, as I believe they have, and as was the intention when the present system was adopted, that a decided advance on the right road has been made. The tramp element which has heretofore swarmed about the Posts, as well as about the Department, has been met with firm denial by the Department Committee. The record of all former dispensations of charity having been compiled by the Assistant Adjutant-General, many of these professed strangers, who were never in Washington "since they marched through to join this and that army," have been confronted with the proof that they have, in fact, before received its charity. The result is that the fraternity of bad men, many of whom, unfortunately, wear the Grand Army badge, who

spend their time between the different National Homes and the rum mills which are their chief delight, and whose only occupation is to besiege Comrades, Posts, and Departments for money with which to feed their vices, have become known to us, and, happily for us, are learning to avoid us.

HEADQUARTERS.

The authority given, upon my request, by the last Encampment, to remove Department Headquarters has not yet been exercised. The reason is that the result of inquiry for proper rooms in a desirable locality disclosed that the rent of such quarters would be not less than \$25 or \$30 per month, adding to this sum the amount that would necessarily be required, in case of removal, for new or additional furniture and fixtures, and then comparing these sums with the small amount now paid, the committee concluded that it would be best to remain in our present headquarters for one more year.

But it is a problem yet to be met. If not voluntarily met, it will, before many months, be forced upon the Department. The flourishing condition of the Posts occupying the premises of which, for rental purposes, present headquarters form a part, renders it almost certain that before many months they will seek other and more suitable accommodations for themselves. In that case headquarters must go also. I recommend, therefore, that the authority last year delegated to a committee composed of the Department Commander, the Assistant Adjutant-General, and the Assistant Quartermaster-General to make the removal then contemplated be continued in full force. Whether compelled to move or not, the Department ought to have better quarters. It is able to afford them, and I believe I shall speak the mind of this entire Encampment, if I say that the new administration will be sustained in immediately finding and renting good and convenient quarters.

At the last semi-annual Encampment the question of securing a hall and premises suited to the general uses of the Department was submitted, and a committee was raised to inquire and report upon it. That committee met and was duly organized, and such subcommittees were designated as seemed necessary. Considerable inquiry has been made, but nothing definite determined upon. It is a large problem, hard to solve, but the subject should be kept alive, and I recommend action looking to that end.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION.

The proceedings of the Council of Administration, whose duty it is by the rules and regulations to audit the accounts of the officers and to present the same for consideration to the Department Encampment, will be laid before you; they exhibit a most satisfactory condition of Department finances.

The sums on hand to the credit of the several funds, in round numbers, are—

To the Charity Fund	\$272
To the General Fund	\$936

This state of the finances has caused the suggestion by the Council that the per capita tax be reduced from fifteen cents to ten cents per quarter, and the charge for badges from sixty-five to forty-five cents, both of which recommendations have my full concurrence.

For caution's sake, however, I wish to suggest that for the balance of the winter the disbursements from the Charity Fund will be very large. The pinching time has come. At our last meeting the Relief Committee dispensed \$20: it might well have dispensed twice that sum; cases now known to the committee will require continued relief; they are deserving cases; more will arise. There are several hundred dollars in the general fund saved to it by the fact of the Department's remaining in the old quarters. I suggest for your consideration and determination whether it would not be well to transfer to the relief fund some of the surplus of the general fund.

"God help the poor!" is a common but a meagre prayer. It may do for us to pray that prayer for all the rest, but for our Comrades, old and decrepid, for their widows and their children, scantily clad, hungry, and cold, "the liberal hand" dispensing relief is better than petitions for a blessing.

Whilst upon the subject of the funds of the Department I call your attention to the justice which I think is due to your servants, the Assistant Adjutant-General and the Assistant Quartermaster-General. I do this now without reserve, because I and you know the worth and faithfulness of the Comrades now occupying these places, and because as to future occupants some one else than myself must determine it. Proper discharge of the duties they per-

form for you requires that twice every week they appear at headquarters and devote themselves to the affairs of the Department; this is the regular routine, but it is only a part of their burden. I think a salary ought to be attached to these offices; the Department is able to pay. The Assistant Adjutant-General ought to be paid not less than \$125 a year, and the Assistant Quartermaster-General not less than \$75, and any settlement of the question should embrace the year now closing.

INCORPORATION.

The suggestion of compensation to the Assistant Quartermaster-General brings me to speak of another matter as connected with that office. Sec. 4, art. VI, chap. III, Rules and Regulations, require that the Assistant Quartermaster-General "shall give good and sufficient security, to be approved by the Council of Administration, for the faithful discharge of his duties." This proviso has not been observed since my knowledge of the Department began. Under existing circumstances it is doubtful if an enforceable bond can be drawn and executed. We are a voluntary association of changing membership; the obligee is a volunteer in his service of the association, he receives no compensation for his labor and care, and in case of loss would by the law of bailments be excused on a small showing of care. Under such circumstances reliance on the honor of the Comrade holding the office is safer than reliance on any bond he could give; but this is not business, nor is it in accordance with Rules and Regulations. To the end, therefore, that the proper course may be entered upon, I recommend that the incoming Council of Administration be instructed that, as soon as may be after their appointment, they assemble and take into consideration the feasibility of incorporating either itself as such Council or the Department Encampment as such, so that there may exist a legally constituted body capable in law of appearing in the courts for the maintenance of its rights. If this is best to be done, (for I have no doubt about the feasibility of it,) the Council could at once take an enforceable bond. I suggest that at the same time it might be well to inquire if such form of corporation could be created as would enable the Posts to use it for the purpose of enabling their Post Quartermasters to give valid bonds.

SOLDIER INTERESTS.

During the year I have received and considered communications indicating that an effort is on foot to interest the Grand Army as a body, and obtain its influence, in the matter of obtaining from Congress a grant of lands or land warrants to each soldier, or, if dead, to his heirs, who served honorably in the war of the rebellion. Such legislation has been several times attempted, and at the third session of the Forty-second Congress a bill reported from the proper committee actually passed the House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate. It was a queer measure, a compound of homestead law and free gift, with settlement provisions that had no force. It would have brought confusion into the land system, and would have benefited nobody but the lawyers and land-sharks.

An adverse report was made upon it in the Senate, and it died the death.

SENATE BILL 340, 48TH CONGRESS.

Early in this Congress there was introduced in the Senate bill No. 340, entitled "A bill granting public lands to the soldiers of the late war of the rebellion."

The bill is plain in terms and honest in import, and is in the main just such a bill as ought to pass if any measure on that subject ought to be enacted into law.

The proposal is that every soldier or sailor who served a period less than one year shall have eighty acres of public land; that all who served between one and two years shall have 120 acres, and that all who served more than two years shall have 160 acres. The right of the soldier to take these tracts is, under the bill, an assignable one. If it should pass, every surviving soldier and the legal representatives of deceased Comrades could, by an inexpensive and simple method, at once put their claims in saleable shape, and thus reap whatever benefit there is in the bill. The first question is, What benefit would there be in it?

It was once estimated by competent authority that there would be at least 2,000,000 persons entitled to claims under such a bill. If each should receive 160 acres, 320,000,000 of acres would be absorbed by these claims, or an area equal to that of the States of Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas.

and Nebraska. I am not in possession of statistics enabling me to state what the quantity would be under the pending bill. The number of persons who served less than one and less than two years I have not yet been able to ascertain, but it is safe to say that 220,000,000 acres of claims could be ready for the market within a brief period from the passage of the act.

The whole of the remaining unsurveyed lands of the United States, excepting Alaska, is about 518,419,367 acres. Out of this deduct the vast mountain chains, the bodies of water, the desert land, lands already granted for railroads, schools, and the like, the mineral lands, Indian territory, and private land claims, and how much will there be left of any real value? As much as will satisfy these soldier claims? I doubt it; but suppose there was or is, it will take years to survey it. Eight million acres a year is about the average speed of the public surveys. At this rate twenty-seven years would be required for furnishing the necessary tracts, and an indefinite number of years would be required to do the land-office work, preliminary to the final patenting of the whole.

Under such circumstances what would your claims be worth, or rather what would they bring. I venture the assertion that ten dollars would be the maximum price of an eighty-acre claim, fifteen dollars of a 120 acre, and twenty dollars of a claim for 160 acres. It is my deliberate judgement that half these sums would within two years be the extreme of the selling price.

It is plain that this would mean that a few men would soon be the owners of all desirable lands yet remaining to the United States, and that our own and the next generation must purchase its lands of these speculators and pay their prices.

I submit that the Grand Army cannot lend itself to a measure having such possibilities of evil in it, and that it ought rather to oppose it.

R. E. LEE CAMP, NO. 1, CONFEDERATE VETERANS.

Myself and other comrades of the Grand Army some time since received circulars from an organization calling itself "R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, Confederate Veterans." It was addressed to "Comrades," and announced the holding of a fair at Richmond, Va., in February next, to raise funds for the indigent and wounded soldiers (Confederate) of the late war, and appealed to the patriotic

soldiers of the Union to unite with them in raising a fund for that purpose. Upon reading this circular it seemed to me that its purpose was to address the individual conscience and liberality of those who had served the Union, and in that light it did not seem to require remark, and was both proper and natural, for it is beyond question true that during the war and since there was less of mere rancor and more of just appreciation between the soldiers of the two armies than found place between those non-combatants who fought each other at long range and from the stump or through the newspaper press. But I am now in receipt of an official circular from headquarters Department of Virginia, Grand Army of the Republic, commending the cause of R. E. Lee Camp, No. 1, to the Comrades of the Grand Army of the Republic, and am also in receipt as well of a general order from the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army, enclosing a copy of the Confederate Veterans' appeal, and asking the opinion of the Department Commanders thereon. From all this I take it that it is considered in the Department of Virginia and by the Commander-in-Chief as in fact an appeal for aid to the Grand Army in its organized capacity, that it is judged in that light that the Commander-in-Chief wants an expression as to the proper course to pursue. For myself I have no difficulty in settling that question.

The Grand Army of the Republic is an organized perpetuation of the convictions of patriotism that won in the great struggle. Its banner is as distinctively the emblem of a patriotism that knows no compromise as is the cross the witness of a changeless faith. This is its high ideal. In its practice it has never pretended to a general purpose of beneficence. Its fraternity is for the Comrades whose faces never knew a frown when the flag of their country was wreathed for victory. Its charity is for those of its own household, for those made desolate—need I say by whose hands? Its loyalty means that undivided devotion to the country's flag and laws that has in it no place for homage for the flag of treason, whether furled or unfurled. I plead for my Comrades and myself that it may be permitted us in the society we have formed for preserving *our* memories of the past and doing what we may to increase the stock of loyalty in the rising future—that we may be permitted, I say, within its narrowing bounds

always to live the thought phrased by a departed Comrade, "that they who fought for the Union were right, everlastingly right; that they who fought against it were wrong, everlastingly wrong." Such a view ought not to be charged to the unkindness of bigotry, or to the remnant of vengefulness surviving the old strife.

For myself, and I believe for you my Comrades, I express the sincere wish that the proposed fair for the indigent and maimed soldiers of the late war who fought against us may gather in so great a harvest that comfort may be brought to the fireside of each and every one of the deserving. In our individual capacity let us show the liberal hand; in our associated capacity let us always be *the Grand Army*.

VISITING ORGANIZATIONS.

During the year it was the pleasure of the Department to participate in the demonstrations made in this city on the occasion of the assembling here of the Society of the Army of the Potomac and of the veteran survivors of the Mexican War. The turnout on each of these occasions was large, and the Grand Army won for itself credit from the community in general, and the thanks and commendations of the bodies to whom their escort was tendered.

MEMORIAL DAY.

Memorial Day was duly observed; the concourse at Arlington, at the Soldiers' Home, and at the Congressional Cemetery was large, evidencing the pleasing fact that the Grand Army has yet a place in the heart and memory of the people.

Not as many of the living Comrades of the Grand Army joined in our march to the place of their dead as ought to have done so, yet I believe that the column was the largest that ever passed to the Virginia shore for the purposes of Memorial Day.

When I last addressed you it was my painful duty to state the fact that by a then recently rendered decision of the Supreme Court the title to the Arlington Cemetery had been decreed not to be in the United States: that our departed Comrades had rest by the sufferance of a stranger. I am pleased now to be able to say that a purchase of the estate has been made, that they sleep now in "their father's house."

EMPLOYMENT.

You will hear the report of the Committee on Employment; but I have more to say on that subject than they have said. The result in the matter of obtaining employment for deserving Comrades has not been as great as it was last year: but this has been no fault of the Committee. They have labored as faithfully and assiduously as their predecessors did. Their chairman, your Senior Vice-Commander, has devoted himself and given of his time without stint to this particular service. Circumstances and conditions have been against us. The fact that we received a considerable recognition last year was remembered when we asked for more. But the principal cause of comparative failure, and that cause which for all future time bars us out of all desirable and honorable places in the appointive civil service of the United States, is to be found in the passage of the act approved January 16, 1883, entitled "An act to regulate and improve the civil service of the United States," and in the regulations prescribed thereunder. True, in the 7th section of the act it is written down "But nothing herein contained shall be construed to take from those honorably discharged from the military or naval service any preference conferred by the 1754th section of the Revised Statutes." and the second subdivision of the twelfth Rule removes, in favor of soldiers and sailors, the limit of forty-five years of age enforced against other applicants for examination. But these seemingly just remembrances of the debt due to the soldiers and sailors are empty pretences, the excuses of insincerity, lame apologies tendered by the authors of the law and by the framers of the rules, whose intent and purpose at bottom was to defeat all such, whether soldier or civilian, who had lived long enough to supplant the mere *rote* of the text-book by the thousand times better and broader wisdom that comes by experience of affairs. There is left to us the menial places; that is, there is for us such poor chance to compete for them as is left over after the pushing politician and the social Ajax has had his chance and preference: and I was about to say that this is all, but it is not all; there is left section 1755 of the Revised Statutes, which *recommends* that bankers, merchants, manufacturers, and farmers give to our disabled Comrades such employment as they have to dispense. This is a slender reed. It

seems to me, now that the Government has in fact withdrawn its own pretence of preference, that it is cruel irony to continue to print its most cheap letter of introduction to others. For one, I wish the now canting recitals were off the book, were out of the law. Some of you are angry that these things are so, and enquire if there is no remedy. Oh, yes; there is a simple, safe, and sure remedy, if only it were right and best to adopt it. There are a quarter of a million of us now organized, and half a million more who would go along, voters every one. In every doubtful State where suffrage is free we hold the balance of power. We could dictate such fair terms as had in them only the demand for the actual preference for our Comrades which has been so long falsely pretended, and enforce them if we would. But this would make of us a political body, or would at least ally us with a party. And this we could not afford for even so good a cause, for in the end destruction of our organization would come of it. I think we may and should take such action as shall tend to protect those of our number who are in appointive places. There are indications that the doctrinaires who have thus far controlled the execution of the law will not be content until they have tried all in office by the text-book standard. The brood of fledglings swarming annually from our poor pretences of colleges, too weak to venture their little boats among other rowers on the professional seas, and spoiled for work by a half education, naturally turn, while yet their memory of rules and formulas remains fresh, to the civil service as their safest refuge. They will have the support of the commission; room will be made for them when and where it can. I think we may and should do this: Organize a committee of vigilance to stand by our Comrades, to expose any injustice done them, and organize for their defence. This is all I see that there is for us to do. At most, but few of the whole Grand Army look to office for support, and happy is it that it is so. We might as well pocket the disappointments we feel when seeking opportunity for some Comrade or for his widowed or dependent ones to earn their bread, we are turned away empty handed, knowing as we do full well that many a place is filled by those who did not march our road when all was in the balance. Comrades, we are growing old. We are among a younger generation whose face is toward the coming day, with whom the past is the dead

past. There is no immortality for the mortal part. Nations have their day and die. That which in the hour of action is the sum of all the greatness that mortal man may do with mortal powers, the next day is only history, a tale that is told. The foot of our sons is in the stirrup: they are mounting to our seats. They will let us tell them of the terrible hour when defeat was suffered or victory won, and they will seem to listen and be interested, but all the while their eager eyes will be bent on fields beyond where their life's battles are to be fought and won. I mean by this that we might as well begin to learn to stand aside, and that it is happy for us that we may, in the safe retreat of the Post-room, turn our backs upon the new fields, and keep fresh in mind the memories of that yesterday the full import of whose events we only know.



REPORT

OF

COMMITTEE ON THE ADDRESS OF THE COMMANDER.

The question raised by the Commander as to the status of Past Post Commanders is one that should be treated fairly, upon dispassionate consideration. We therefore concur in the suggestion that a committee should be appointed to consider and report upon the matter at the next semi-annual Department Encampment, and we recommend that a committee of five members be appointed for that purpose.

Recommendation adopted by the Encampment.

We concur in the recommendation that the incoming Commander be left free to exercise his own judgment as to the composition of the Relief Committee, and that otherwise the resolution of the last Annual Encampment as to the general plan of relief be continued in force.

Recommendation adopted.

The recommendation to continue the authority heretofore delegated to a committee consisting of the Commander, Ass't Adj't Gen'l, and Ass't Q. M. Gen'l, to procure, and remove to, suitable Department Headquarters, meets with our decided approval.

Recommendation adopted.

We concur in the suggestion of the Council of Administration, as stated by the Commander, that the *per capita* tax and the price of badges may be reduced for the coming year: and to that end we propose the following resolution:

Resolved, That the *per capita* tax for the year 1884 shall be ten cents per quarter, and that, until otherwise ordered, the price of badges shall be forty-five cents each.

Adopted by the Encampment.

We do not approve the suggestion to transfer any part of the General Fund to the Relief Fund. We are of opinion that the Relief Fund will be ample to meet all proper requirements; and that, under the proposed reduction of the *per capita* tax, and the probable increase of expenses attendant upon the proposed removal of Department Headquarters, and the proposed remuneration for past services to the Ass't Adj't Gen'l and Ass't Q. M. Gen'l, the General Fund may not have at the end of the year more than a reasonable and safe margin above the expenses of the year.

Adopted.

We do not approve the recommendation to attach salaries to the offices of Ass't Adj't Gen'l and Ass't Q. M. Gen'l. But in consideration of the long, arduous, and unpaid services of the present incumbents, (except that the Ass't Adj't Gen'l was paid \$100 for the year 1882 only,) we recommend that the Ass't Adj't Gen'l be paid \$150 for the year just expired and that the Ass't Q. M. Gen'l be paid \$100 for the year just expired, and that the future payment of salaries be left to future Encampments.

Adopted.

The recommendation in regard to instructing the Council of Administration to make inquiry, and to take action if found desirable, looking to the incorporation of either the Council of Administration or the Department Encampment, as such, meets with our approval.

Adopted.

Comrades Gibson, Granger, Gifford, and O'Connor, of this committee, concur in the views of the Commander in regard to the bill pending in Congress to grant lands to all soldiers who served in the late war of the rebellion, the Commander's conclusion being that the Grand Army ought not to favor, but rather oppose, a measure having such possibilities of evil in it.

Adopted.

Comrade Crandall, in view of the fact that a large proportion of the surviving soldiers of the late war are residents of the great West, where the vacant lands of the Government mostly lie, and that they could and would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the bill to become land-owners by actual location of lands under the terms of the law, cannot think it wise for the Grand Army of this Department to place itself in an attitude of hostility to this measure.

The committee approve the eminently patriotic and conservative views of the Commander in regard to the recent appeal of R. E. Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans for contributions in aid of a fund for the benefit of indigent and wounded soldiers of the late Confederate army. His views as expressed are ours also—that individuals of our fraternity may well put forth the generous helping hand in whatever direction may come the cry of suffering humanity; but that, remembering for what cause and for what purposes the Grand Army was organized, we say with the Commander, "In our associated capacity let us always be the Grand Army."

Adopted by the Encampment

The candid, brave, and burning words of the Commander under the head of "Employment," and relating to the baneful effects upon the Grand Army of the so-called civil service law, and the rules of the civil service framed under it, meet with our hearty approval. We regret that so bold, so true, and so scathing a criticism upon the hollow fraud of civil service reform, involving as it does the practical ostracism of the late defenders of the Union, cannot be placed in the hands of every voter of the United States. This being, of course, impracticable, we recommend that it at least be furnished to every Comrade of this Department, and that extra copies be sent to every G. A. R. Department Headquarters.

Adopted.

In conclusion, to the end that the above recommendation may be practically carried into effect, and that the numerous other recommendations and opinions submitted by the Commander may be also conveyed to the general membership of the Grand Army in this Department, we recommend that 4,000 copies of the address entire, together with this report, be printed for distribution.

This recommendation was amended by inserting "5,000" in lieu of "4,000," and then adopted.

WM. GIBSON,
H. J. GIFFORD,
W. W. GRANGER,
D. O'CONNOR,
C. P. CRANDALL.

ROSTER
OF
Department of the Potomac, G. A. R.
1884.

D. S. ALEXANDER, *Commander.*

N. M. BROOKS, *S. V. Commander.*

S. A. H. MCKIM, *J. V. Commander.*

FLORENCE DONOHUE, *Medical Director.*

Rev. BEN. SWALLOW, *Chaplain.*

Official Staff.

C. H. INGRAM, *Ass't Adjutant-General.*

AMOS J. GUNNING, *Ass't Quartermaster-General.*

CHAS. MATTHEWS, *Inspector.*

FRED. MACK, *Judge Advocate.*

DENNIS O'CONNOR, *Chief Mustering Officer.*

Aides-de-Camp—A. F. MEDFORD, H. E. WEAVER, W. B. BROWN, M. T. ANDERSON,
RICH'D HENDERSON, N. B. PRENTICE, THOS. HYNES, W. W. WINSHIP,
JOS. BURROUGHS, W. HOWARD MILLS, M. M. HOLLAND.

Ass't Inspectors—ASA L. CARRIER, M. D. MONTIS, EDW'D RENAUD.

Council of Administration—N. B. FITHIAN, F. C. REVELS, LEVI NAGLE,
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